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NOTES ON CURRENT AND RECENT EVENTS.

ANTHROPOLOGY—PSYCHOLOGY—MEDICINE

Anthropological Study of Criminals in Belgium.—(From *Revue Penitentiaire*. From Belgium comes government recognition of the practical value of scientific investigation of the criminal classes. In connection with the prison of Forest there has been established by royal order a laboratory of anthropology for the collection and correlation of the results of anthropological investigation concerning its prisoners.

The Minister of Justice, in his report to the king, states that anthropological investigations concerning the characteristics of prisoners have, besides the well-recognized scientific value, a practical value in the penitentiary regime. He speaks of the dual aim of the penitentiary—punishment and reform—and holds that to attain the last it is necessary to obtain as much data as possible concerning the individual. It is necessary, he states, to make an investigation of his origin, his native environment, the environment in which he developed and that in which he committed the crime, also to make a thorough physical and mental examination. From the resulting data conclusions will be drawn which will determine the most efficient mode of treating the individual prisoner while confined and often also the precise degree of his guilt.

CLARA HARRISON TOWN, Lincoln, Ill.

S. S. Gregory on the Treatment of Insane Murderers.—The account of the meeting of the Wisconsin branch of the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, which was contained in the *Milwaukee Free Press* for December 2, 1911, gives a great deal of space to the recommendations made by President Gregory of Chicago in his address at the meeting of the Wisconsin branch, which was, on the date mentioned, in session at Milwaukee. Mr. Gregory insists upon defining insanity as a chronic disease and upon recognizing it, therefore, as a physical ailment. Its existence or non-existence is a question for experiments and high-minded medical experts to decide. He referred to the old idea that the one great aim of punishment was vengeance and to the fact that this idea was losing its hold and that even the idea that punishments were valuable for their deterrent effect was sometimes denied. If, as the direct result of disease, a man does what he would not otherwise do, he does not merit punishment.

At the same meeting Col. Nathan William MacChesney emphasized the slogan of the day, which is individualization of punishment, considering the act committed, the offense against society, and protection of society, yet notwithstanding, with an eye always to the offender, his motives, his environment, his limitations, his possibilities, and applying the remedy with an eye to the future, so as to reclaim the individual, if possible, for future usefulness to his community without at the same time sacrificing the real demands of society.

R. H. G.